

1. Chapter

1.  *The Florentine Codex, c. 1585*

2. Test

🔗 <i>The Florentine Codex</i>, c. 1585

## Introduction

European explorers unwittingly brought diseases with them as they made contact with the residents of the New World. These invisible microbes had devastating and profound consequences: Native Americans had never been exposed to diseases such as smallpox, measles, influenza, and typhoid, and therefore had no immunities. These diseases wreaked havoc on the Native American societies, wholly destroying some groups and severely weakening others. The following image ([\[link\]](#)) comes from *The Florentine Codex*, a compilation of materials and information on Aztec history organized by Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún and his students. The friar spent over fifty years studying Aztec culture and history, working on the Codex from 1545 until his death in 1590. The Codex consists of more than twenty-four hundred pages, with images drawn by Native American artists. The accompanying text was written in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztec people.

## Sourcing Questions

### Exercise:

**Problem:** Who were the authors of this document?

### Exercise:

**Problem:**

What purpose would Sahagún have in compiling a resource on Aztec history and culture?



"[The disease] brought great desolation: a great many died of it. They could no longer walk about, but lay in their dwellings and sleeping places, no longer able to move or stir. They were unable to change position, to stretch out on their sides or face down, or raise their heads.

And when they made a motion, they called out loudly. The pustules that covered people caused great desolation; very many people died of them, and many just starved to death; starvation reigned, and no one took care of others any longer. On some people, the pustules appeared only far apart, and they did not suffer greatly, nor did many of them die of it. But many people's faces were spoiled by it, their faces were made rough. Some lost an eye or were blinded."

### Comprehension Questions

**Exercise:**

**Problem:**

([link](#)) How has the artist captured the suffering of the sick in this image?

**Exercise:**

**Problem:**

([link](#)) Apart from the actual illness, what other consequences did smallpox have on the Aztec people, based on the accompanying text?

**Historical Reasoning Questions**

**Exercise:**

**Problem:**

Could disease be considered a weapon used in the conquest of the Aztec empire? Explain.

Test

a new test